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ABSTRACT

Two studies (from 1989 and 1990) are reviewed to illustrate the effectiveness and versatility of "ethnographies of thought" (as described by C. Geertz, 1983) for gaining significant understanding of the meaning perspectives of research participants and the contexts of a variety of educational settings. The methodological implications of the two studies are discussed. Although they focused on different research questions and settings, both studies used a naturalistic design and involved the collection of three sources of verbatim data. The first study focused on the assessment of a preservice teacher's professional learning during a practicum semester, and the second examined the salient issues of a school and business partnership. In-depth data collection for the first study utilized one student teacher. Data were also collected from the cooperating teacher. In the second study, data were collected from members of a single partnership and resonance sought in a second partnership. Experiences with both studies indicate that if participants are to be "understood," a significant investment of time in the ethnography is mandatory to give the researcher adequate insight. Two figures and a 20-item list of references are included. (SLD)

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**Ethnographies of Thought in Varied Settings:
The Acquisition of Rich Understandings of
Context and Cognition in Education**

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Introduction

The purpose of the paper is to illustrate the effectiveness and versatility of "ethnographies of thought" (Geertz, 1983) for gaining significant understandings of the meaning perspectives of research participants and the contexts of a variety of educational settings. This paper presents the methodological implications of two studies conducted as ethnographies of thought which utilized the same methods (Wolfe, 1989a & DelPizzo, 1990), though each was focused on a different research question and setting. Drawing from both the interpretive tradition in anthropology and the constructivist perspective in psychology, the studies used a naturalistic design and involved the collection of three sources of verbatim data.

The first study focused on the assessment of a pre-service teacher's professional learning during the practicum semester and the second examined the salient issues of a school/business partnership. The paper includes not only the researchers' analysis of the methodology and its uses, but also verbatim data from research participants

regarding their perceptions of the approach used in the research. The paper concludes with a discussion of the implications of the perspectives and methodology used in these studies for research in other educational settings.

Theoretical Framework and Methods

The theoretical framework of both studies is based on Clifford Geertz's approach to interpretive anthropology, in particular his concept of "ethnographies of thought." Based on an interview with Geertz, Paul (1988) concludes, "(Geertz) argues that ethnography is not the derivation of 'laws' that attempt to explain behavior, but the investigation of how people structure meaning in society" (p. A4). For Geertz, "thinking is to be understood ethnographically, that is, by describing the world in which it makes whatever sense it makes" (Geertz, 1983, p.152).

Bruner (1986) has suggested that interpretive social science holds considerable relevance for the constructivist study of cognition. The interpretive tradition is described by Geertz in part as a "movement away from functionalist accounts of the devices on which societies rest toward interpretative ones of the kinds of lives societies support" (Geertz, 1983, p. 93). This means that thinking is a primary object of study for interpretive researchers, but it must be understood "ethnographically" - within the social context in which it makes "sense." Accomplishing ethnographies of thought requires the collection of what Geertz calls convergent data:

By convergent data I mean descriptions, measures, observations, what you will, which are at once diverse, even rather miscellaneous, both as to type and degree of precision and generality, unstandardized facts, opportunistically collected and variously portrayed, which yet turn out to shed light on one another... (Geertz, 1983, p. 156).

The interpretive approach to anthropological inquiry advocated by Geertz and others emphasizes research via fieldwork: "convergent data" are collected in natural settings. A well-known perspective on research from the perspective of interpretive anthropology is the "naturalistic inquiry" of Lincoln and Guba (1985). To conduct naturalistic research, according to their perspective, is to attempt to understand phenomena from the participants' frame of reference. The researcher is the human "instrument" of data collection, who, building on tacit knowledge and using qualitative methods, pursues fieldwork in natural settings and engages in an inductive and recursive process of data collection and analysis. This process results in a case report that is both idiographically interpreted and tentatively applied.

To avoid the "myth of pure induction," Erickson (1986) refers to this process as "deliberative." Although it is inductive in the sense that the research is pursued as "progressive problem solving, in which issues of sampling, hypothesis generation, and hypothesis testing go hand in hand," the research process is not "mysterious" since decisions are carefully made and are explicated as fully as possible for

the reader of the research report (p. 140). This provides "retrospective accountability" (Silvers 1982) of the reasonableness of the actions taken by the researcher.

As a result of these procedures characteristic of naturalistic inquiry, there are few *a priori* constraints imposed by the researcher on antecedent conditions or on the variables given attention during the study. This contrasts sharply with experimental research conducted from a positivistic frame of reference, which requires high degrees of constraint on both kinds of variables. Experimental research is most appropriate when much is known about the phenomenon under study and *a priori* hypothesis and appropriate experimental method can be specified. Ethnographies of thought based on a naturalistic design, on the other hand, are most appropriate when it is necessary to enter the natural setting to gain the knowledge and insight into phenomena that are otherwise unavailable and that are necessary for the construction of hypotheses about the nature of the phenomena in particular contexts.

As a result, according to Erickson (1986), naturalistic inquiry is a suitable choice when the researcher needs to know about:

- the specific nature and structure of phenomena rather than their general character of overall distribution across a number of places.
- The "meaning-perspectives" of participants in particular

contexts.

- The identification of specific influences on phenomena identified or suggested by other research.

A naturalistic design is particularly well-suited for the conduct of ethnographies of thought because such studies require a rich understanding of the thinking of participants within context. The two ethnographies of thought discussed in this paper, which sought understanding of cognitive stance in one student teaching setting and the salient themes of two school/business partnerships, both required that which is the primary goal of naturalistic inquiry: the description and interpretation of the meaning perspectives of participants in particular settings.

In choosing procedures for describing and interpreting the thinking of participants, the researchers were careful to consider issues of reliability and validity as they relate to qualitative research. Given its distinctive nature, naturalistic inquiry requires unique criteria for "trustworthiness," since the criteria used for establishing validity and reliability in more traditional quantitative approaches do not apply (see Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Indeed, the concepts of validity and reliability require re-definition in order to be understood in the context of ethnographies of thought conducted as naturalistic inquiry.

According to Kirk and Miller (1986), validity in a naturalistic study is established by "calling things by their right names" -- by capturing and recording accurately the phenomena under study. In the same vein, reliability in naturalistic inquiry can be accomplished by checking the strength of the data to insure that the researcher could expect to obtain the same findings if (s)he tried again in the same way.

Establishing reliability and validity in ethnography of thoughts is akin to what Erickson (1986) calls the avoidance of evidentiary inadequacy. To guard against evidentiary inadequacy, the naturalistic researcher must attempt to insure that adequate amounts and kinds of data are collected, that the complexities of the setting and the meaning perspectives of the participants were taken into account and understood, that data are sought to disconfirm emerging interpretations, and that discrepant data are carefully scrutinized and compared with other data (see Erickson, 1986, p. 140).

In order to remain congruent with the theoretical framework chosen for the design of the two studies discussed in this paper, the collection and analysis of data in both studies were based on Glaser and Strauss's (1967) grounded theory approach. This approach to naturalistic inquiry, like Geertz's ethnographies of thought, is also drawn from the literature of interpretive anthropology. The grounded theory method offers a "systematic approach for generating substantive theories that are born in and help explain the real world" (Hutchinson, 1988, p. 124). Interpretations are derived from observed data and

are not intended primarily to verify existing theory or to generate "laws".

Glaser and Strauss' method enabled the researchers to construct interpretations "grounded" in the research itself; that is, their interpretations were educed from the data, not imposed upon the data. Both studies avoided the imposition of an *a priori* theory that might have been incongruent with the meaning perspectives of the participants.

Use of the grounded theory method required the researchers, as much as possible, to collect, organize, and analyze data simultaneously so that these processes "blur and intertwine continually, from the beginning of investigation to the end" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 43). This recursive process is called "theoretical sampling" and helps guide decisions about what further data are needed and where they might be found. The interpretation of events under study slowly emerged from this procedure, so that hypotheses about the participants and setting (not identified in advance) flowed out of the data themselves.

In both studies, data were triangulated to help avoid evidentiary inadequacy (for a discussion of triangulation, see Cohen & Manion, 1985). To accomplish triangulation, three data sources were used: interviews, field observations, and reflective journals (see Figure 1). Often during data collection, data gathered from one source (e.g., observation) provided guidance for subsequent data collection with one of the other methods (e.g., interviews).

In-depth data collection in the first study was done with one student teacher. Data were also collected with the cooperating teacher to help confirm/disconfirm interpretations of the student teacher's thinking and the setting. Data collection and analysis procedures for the research were refined in a pilot study of another student teaching setting during the previous semester (see Wolfe, 1989a).

In the second study, data was collected with members of a single partnership and resonance sought in a second partnership. After completion of interviews and data analysis with the first partnership, interviews were done with members of a second partnership for comparative purposes. This process is labeled "resonance finding" (see DelPizzo, 1990).

Field notes consisting of accounts of observations were kept by researchers in both studies. In Study 1, a reflective journal was kept by the student teacher. Both studies included lengthy interviews of participants that were tape-recorded interviews and transcribed verbatim. The data were collected, coded, and analyzed in sequential loops at three distinct levels (see Figure 2). Level I coding consisted of in vivo/substantive codes using the exact words of the participants. Level II coding resulted in tentative themes for condensing of Level I codes, and Level III coding posed grounded themes that conceptualize the relationships among the three levels of codes. This coding provided pattern to the data. The fact that all themes were grounded

in data aided in preventing abstract or unfounded theorizing (Hutchinson, 1988).

While coding, the researchers employed the technique of memoing, writing notes in the margins of the transcribed data to contextualize the event in the data and to serve as a reminder of the significance of the event. Memos served to provide an illustration of an idea or to capture some aspect of an emerging interpretation, and they prevented the use of the same incident over and over for different themes (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). As a result of constant dialogue that occurred between the researchers and the events described in the data, decisions were constantly made about data and where events fit within the emergent themes. The researchers continuously read and re-read the data and made decisions about the placement of data within a range of already identified themes.

Saturation occurred when all levels of coding were completed and no new data indicated additional themes (see Hutchinson, 1988). At this point, the researchers had reached a sense of closure by repeatedly asking questions and verifying conclusions. After sorting and saturation, interpretations were written with the themes as the focus, grounded by data that explain the participants' meanings.

Figure 1: Triangulation of Data

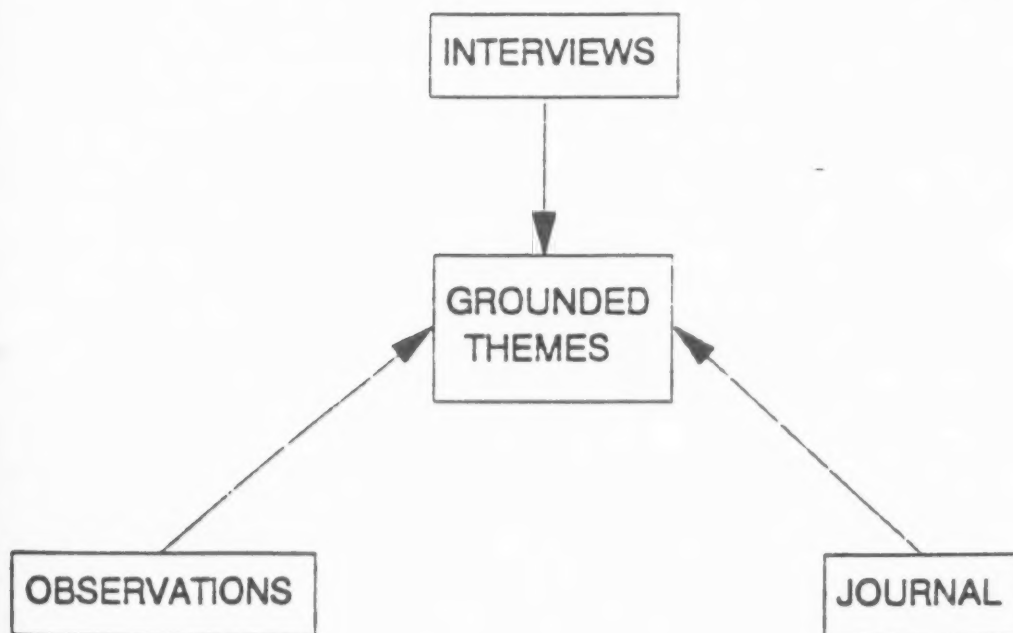
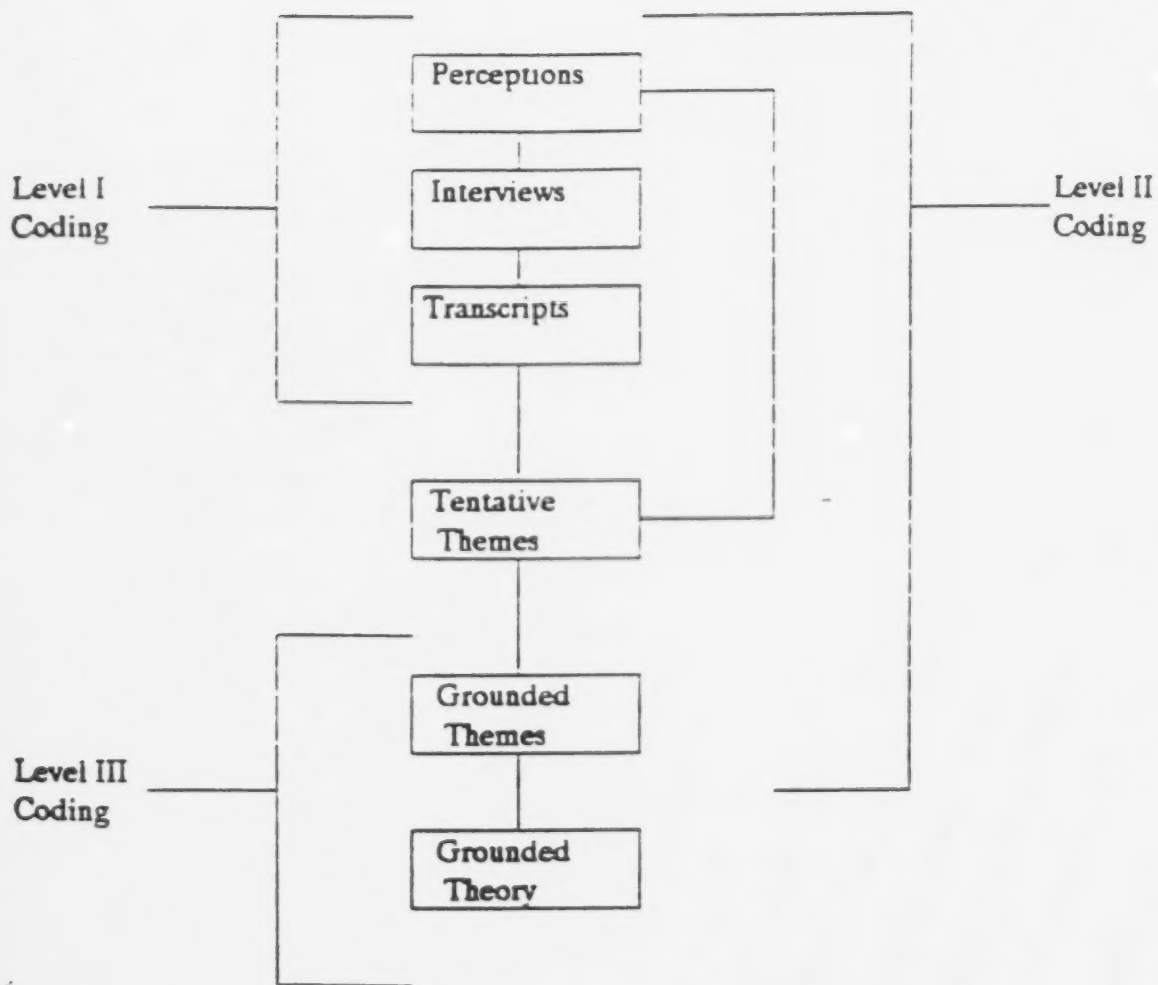


Figure 2: Coding Progression



Summary of the Studies' Findings

Grounded theory permits structured entry to new, different, or unclear problems in education. A good theory proposes a new and relevant way of seeing (Hutchinson, p.137). In the two ethnographies of thought conducted by the authors, the conceptual framework and related methodologies used provided rich and helpful understandings of participant thinking in two different educational contexts: a student teaching practicum in a junior high school (called here "Study 1") and two school/business partnerships ("Study 2").

Study 1

The research on the participant ("Bonnie") in Study 1 (Wolfe, 1989a) yielded significant understanding of the student teacher's stances toward five elements of teaching (subject matter, learners, learning, teacher role, and milieu) and of the continuing negotiation of these stances during the practicum semester. Her initial stances on these elements were derived primarily from her past educational experiences and were focused on a few major themes. Together, Bonnie's stances toward the teaching elements made up an interrelated set of stances toward the world of teaching, each identifiable from, yet intricately connected to, the others.

In general terms, Bonnie's stances on the five elements of teaching can best be described as comprised of the meanings and explanations which she derived from and attached to her representations of

teaching. These representations were based on past educational experiences and the experiences she was having in her practicum. Her stances were not held in theoretical form (e.g., If I do x, then y will occur), as considerable previous research on teachers' implicit cognition has suggested. Instead, they were a personal, normative, sometimes emotion-laden extension of what Bonnie knew about teaching and about herself (I know/have experienced x; therefore I should be/do/strive for y). Her stances tended to be implicitly held, sometimes difficult for her to make explicit and communicate to others. Nevertheless, her stances were observable in her language of practice, and, over time, Bonnie became more fluent in her verbal expressions of her positions on teaching and in her recounting of the experiences through which she constructed these positions.

Bonnie's stance negotiation toward subject matter, learners, learning, and teacher role followed a similar path; that is, her student teaching experiences presented challenges to her initial stances that formed the impetus for her re-negotiation of her positions on these aspects of teaching. Early and unexpected encounters with what Schön calls "problems of practice" led Bonnie to question her initial positions. In approaching these problems, she initially used strategies quite foreign to her initial positions on the elements of teaching. However, after struggling with a number of problem episodes to which she responded in uncharacteristic ways, Bonnie slowly began to experiment with strategies more consonant with her initial stances.

The data also revealed considerable information about the milieu of Bonnie's student teaching and the negotiation of her stance toward it. In particular, it illuminated the interaction of Bonnie's thinking with that of her cooperating teacher, an aspect of the context which the researcher called the practicum's "behavioral world" (see Schön, 1987). In this case, the nature and interaction of the themes which comprised Bonnie's and Donna's stances toward teaching, and toward the setting of student teaching in particular, when combined with the hectic, public nature of the school environment in which they practiced and with the characteristics of traditional arrangements for student teaching, created unintended barriers to achieving the convergence of meaning which Schön identifies as important in a practicum.

The data revealed that Bonnie's stance negotiation was not a neat, linear process. It tended to be a circular, somewhat messy one in which dilemmas emerged, were partially overcome, and then recurred and forced further re-negotiation of stance. Problems of practice -- times when Bonnie's professional knowledge and stances did not "fit" or seem relevant to her new experiences -- tended to provide the impetus for her stance negotiation. As a result, these problems presented important opportunities for growth in Bonnie's professional learning.

The major themes of Bonnie's initial stances on subject matter, learners, learning, and milieu continued to be important to Bonnie and

played a significant role in her learning process. They served as reference points for her on-going stance negotiation. Over time, her representations of teaching and her stances expanded to incorporate both the themes of her initial positions and the new information which she derived from her practicum experiences.

The findings of Study 1 provide needed and useful information on cognitive change during student teaching and the interaction of context and cognition in a practicum setting. As a result, rich detail is available from these data on issues of teacher learning such as the impact of the cooperating teacher-student teacher relationship on professional knowledge growth (Wolfe, 1989b), the development of pedagogical content knowledge (Wolfe & Murray, 1990), and the negotiation of stance toward the role of teacher (Wolfe & Murray, 1991). Detailed information of the kind provided by this study is vital to enhancing our understanding of teacher learning, as well as for enabling an effective reform of programs of teacher education.

Study 2

The findings of the second study delineated eight salient themes of a school/business partnership.

1. *Empathy/understanding*: participants from both sides of the partnership have a greater appreciation for the rigor of each others' professional responsibilities;
2. *Accountability*: someone from each side of the partnership arrangement is responsible for keeping the

lines of communication open and seeing to it that planned activities occur;

3. *World of work*: the world of employment that students will encounter after formal schooling;
4. *Exchange of resources*: each side of the partnership performs a service for the other;
5. *Communication/cultural gap*: that lack of understanding that occurs because of the difference in the business environment and the school environment;
6. *Esteem*: inner feeling of self-worth that was confirmed and enhanced by partners working together, valuing what each other does for a living;
7. *Corporate responsibility*: the belief that business has a responsibility to aid the education community in the schooling of youth; and
8. *Public relations*: business being involved with schools because it is good for their image.

The data also suggest that participants need a strong personal investment in their partnership. Within a partnership, people are communicating across professional and cultural divides, a process that requires effort and commitment on the part of participants. However, communication barriers can be overcome by a spirit of collaboration that develops from working together on partnership projects.

The themes identified in this study provide a useful perspective the "lived experiences" of the members of the partnership. The data surrounding the themes describes participant's behaviors and allows outside observers or interested parties a look at what goes on within the lifeworld of the stakeholders--to be voyeurs, so to speak. Each theme separately is one piece of the mosaic that makes up the relationship between the school and the business. When viewed

separately they explain various aspects of the partnership. When viewed as a whole they portray a complicated set of human interactions about the partnership that makes up what Geertz (1983) calls local knowledge.

The results provide researchers with three tools: (1) a window into a partnership, (2) a broader knowledge base, and (3) the parts needed to construct an evaluative instrument. The data clearly identifies some salient themes of the partnership. Whether or not these themes are echoed in other partnerships must be ratified through further research. The fact that themes are identified where, it appears, there never was such evidence suggests that the eight key themes add to the knowledge base of school/business partnerships. Additionally, the themes that evolved from this data collection provide a base that may allow the construction of an evaluation instrument that asks partnership participants to examine areas of their relationship with their partner. A series of questions could easily be compiled using the themes listed in this study.

Perceptions of Participants and Researchers on the Usefulness of Ethnographies of Thought

Both Study 1 and Study 2 illustrate the usefulness and versatility of the approach to research; both were conducted as "ethnographies of thought" in order to identify the social/psychological perspectives of the participants. The naturalistic design allowed individuals to

provide testimony and evidence about events under study, and the data were interpreted by both participants and researchers.

Following the completion of the studies the researchers concluded that ethnography of thought is an extremely productive vehicle for learning about the perspectives and understandings of participants in a wide variety of educational settings and programs. Both studies indicate that ethnography of thought is a powerful tool for both the researcher who is seeking understanding of an educational context and the participants being studied. The comments of the participants suggest that they found the methodology quite helpful in prompting reflection about their thoughts and experiences in the settings and created a feeling of being "understood."

In order to effectively use the method the researcher must realize that it is not a mechanical process. The researcher must build relationships with the participants in order to understand the "events under study" from the participants' point of view and identify the context's "common sense." Geertz (1983) says that the naturalistic perspective captures the idea of "common sense" as a cultural system, a loosely connected body of beliefs and judgment that he terms local knowledge. He says that common sense is not something that just happens; it is a special mind set that takes on characteristic form dependent on the setting. The setting determines what form will evolve, and, as the form evolves, the analyst can look closely at certain views and define the attitudes that permeate and govern the setting.

After examining closely the particular views of a mind set and defining the attitudes that permeate the setting, an attempt can be made to extrapolate categories, "the generality of their reference, and the condition of their use" (Geertz, pp.10-11). Again, the emphasis is on research via naturalistic perspective: an attempt to understand phenomena for the actors' point of view. The researcher becomes part of the participants' world and comes to understand the participants' frame of reference.

By gathering and interpreting data in the natural setting, the researcher is the vehicle by which the participants' perceptions are captured and written. An accurate portrayal of the themes of participants' meaning-making is the primary goal of data analysis. According to Geertz, an investigation done as ethnographies of thought "is inseparable from how its results are put into words. What does an ethnographer do? - (s)he writes" (Paul, 1988, p. A5).

In an ethnography of thought, how accurate are the researcher's words in capturing the meaning of participants? What are participants' reactions to the process of being studied in this way? To help answer these questions, participants in study 1 and 2 were interviewed after the completion of the research. Their reflections, presented below, confirm that, in both cases, the perspective and method used successfully explained phenomena from the participants' perspective and helped inform understanding of both professional learning and the nature of school/business partnerships.

Participant in Study 1

At various time throughout the semester in which this research was conducted, Bonnie had reported that the researcher's presence was welcomed rather than troublesome, and that she found being observed this way "different" from the observations of her supervisor or cooperating teacher. As part of the final interview with the student teacher in Study 1, the researcher asked Bonnie about her perceptions of the research process. To begin the discussion, and to confirm the unsolicited comments Bonnie had made earlier in the semester, the researcher asked Bonnie if the experience of being observed by her university supervisor felt different to her from being observed by the researcher. She replied:

Yeah (it was different), because I knew she her supervisor) was there evaluating me. After I came to know her better, it wasn't so bad because she is really nice about things...

Though the researcher had no formal role in Bonnie's student teaching and did not participate in its events except as observer and interviewer, after awhile Bonnie came to see the researcher as a "helpful" presence in her student teaching. One of the first indications of this came after Bonnie had cried during an interview while she was exploring some deep feelings about the contexts of her student teaching. She subsequently said how good it had been to have

the researcher there to talk to, and she wrote in her journal a few days later:

I think talking with others about how you feel makes you stronger. You need to get those frustrations out in the open and deal with them...

In the final interview, the researcher asked Bonnie to reflect on her experiences as a participant in the study:

Researcher: Tell me what it was like to have me follow you around all semester and ask you all these questions. Did it interfere...or did it matter at all? What was it like? And please be honest! (Laughing) If it was miserable, I can live with that!

Bonnie: (Laughing) Well, I don't think it was miserable at all. (More seriously) Really, I leaned on you a lot, I think, because I felt like you were there watching what was going on and you could understand how I feel. I am just really glad that you were there. A lot of times, I was hoping that you would be there, to see things for yourself, that I was feeling a certain way.

Researcher: You felt like when you talked to me I would know what it was you were feeling?

Bonnie: Yeah. And I felt privileged to be part of the study because through my experience I might be helping other students - just be telling the truth about what was happening and how it feels.

Researcher: I felt like you were always truthful with me... but you don't feel, then, that I was an intruder in your student teaching?

Bonnie: No. I never got nervous when you were there.

Bonnie seemed to have perceived the researcher's presence as a supportive one. The nondirective, nonevaluative stance sought by the researcher in order to implement the design for this ethnography of thought appeared not only to have resulted in productive data collection, but also to have led to Bonnie's feeling "understood." In fact, she suggested that, from her point of view, other student teachers would appreciate the chance to be seen and heard as she had been in this study:

Bonnie: ...it would be nice if every student teacher had someone there, sort of to watch what was going on...I think a lot of times student teachers don't really have someone there who understands.

As a result of the research methods used, Bonnie seemed to derive a sense of security - a feeling of being heard and understood - that she

felt may have been otherwise unavailable to her. She said, "It feels good to air things out - to talk to someone and know it is not going to affect your grade." In a setting where evaluation is usually the object of observation and questioning, Bonnie welcomed the nonevaluative observation and interviews of the research. She even came to see the researcher as a trusted confidante.

Bonnie's reactions to the study, coupled with the rich data this research yielded on her student teaching, suggest that the design and methods used for this ethnography of thought were successful in eliciting honest accounts of Bonnie's thinking and accurate assessments of the research context. An unintended result of this process is that the stance adopted by the researcher in order to access the meaning perspectives of the participant seemed to have a quasi-therapeutic effect. That is, they created a sense of "being understood" that Bonnie found reassuring amidst the often stressful experiences of her student teaching.

Participants in Study 2

The following quotes are from the participants in the school/business partnership study who were interviewed after the study was completed.

Business Participants:

" I felt comfortable, not pressured, allowed for creative thinking. The interviewer was not judgmental.

After reading the report it was, from my perspective, accurate. There were no misquotes from me. I was able to identify myself and was very accurately represented. The author did not slant my viewpoint. I am very much in favor of the approach and agree with the results that were drawn. I think that the data presented did indeed lead to the general themes that the author stated."

"I believe that if you want to know about something go to the people that are actually involved in doing the work. One can't give an accurate perspective of how a job is done without having done the work. Need practice. The most effective managers know the workers frustrations and the rewards firsthand."

Teachers:

"Maybe its because you are such an easy person to talk with. If you had given me very strict, very severe questions that I had to sit here and feel like I had to come up with intellectual answer for I would have had problems with it. Because I could just sit here and chat with you. My kids were wondering in and out and we stopped and I don't know how that affected your study but I know that it made it easy for me to be a participant."

"Well, the idea is to get a window into your world."

(researcher)

"As far as your questions go, I think it's really good. Had you written down the questions and I had to make written responses it wouldn't have been nearly as effective. In the midst of our conversations we could throw around the words and you couldn't misconstrue my meaning. Set questions, as in a survey, I would have had to fit into a mold you are trying to make. When you talk with someone your answers are so diverse and surveys are not always accurate and some interviews--well, I teach my students that you have to leave open-ended questions--as a last resort we have somebody write the answers if we really can't get to talk with them. Generally it's best to talk with them because you get a whole different perspective."

"I think probably because you talked to a variety of people--obviously the way you did it--because all of our answers were similar."

"I was really pleased with the way it turned out with what you were looking for and how it turned out. We all have the general concerns, we want to make sure that we are all accountable, and that there is a mutuality. That was one of my main concerns. I didn't feel like we were doing enough for the partnership."

"You could have made a survey on your computer and we could have written the answers down but you wouldn't have gotten the insight that you did from talking to us."

School Administrators:

"I felt that the method was good and results were accurate and there were a lot of questions that you asked and at the time I didn't see how they were related to the total thing, but it all came together."

"I wonder sometimes about the scope of it, I don't know if you talked to other schools or partnerships but as far as it goes I felt comfortable with the method."

"A lot of times I didn't feel we were being questioned because you did serve on that committee and you attended all of the partnership activities. You were part of the school and I think you would be more apt to get an honest answer. We didn't have to put on the Ritz..."

"You were there when we were actually conducting business. It was not a dry run or a simulation so you really don't have time to explain what is going on"

"One of the most interesting things was how similar the quotes were from the other end. We don't really know but

you talked to them and they felt exactly like we did. You know, about how they were nervous when they came in."

"I can remember the first meeting five-six years ago when the group from LU came up to visit LHS for the first time they were actually afraid of what was going to happen when the classes changed in the hallways because of all the public opinion that is outside and it is supposed to be chaos, unorganized."

"I had no problem with the method. Of course knowing you as a member of our school community as a parent I felt comfortable talking with you--maybe gave you more information than you actually needed. Because of having that relationship and being able to talk with you. Was not at all offended or upset with anything that was done, in fact, was happy to do it."

"If we were making up things we were more apt to be caught. Cause you know what has happened. We didn't have to make up anything we just talked about the way it was."

Perceptions/Reflections of the Researchers

Participants in both Study 1 and Study 2 believed that the findings accurately portrayed their feelings. They also said that they spoke freely with the researchers. Neither researcher perceives this to be a

serendipitous result, since both invested significant time in their respective research settings getting to know the participants and contexts of their research and allowing themselves to be known. Additionally, in both studies, the researchers adopted nondirective, nonevaluative approaches to their interactions with participants in order to encourage open, honest exploration of participants' thinking.

To conduct a successful ethnography of thought, it is important for participants to feel comfortable with the interviewer. The efforts of the researchers to build productive relationships with the persons whose meaning perspectives they sought to understand yielded positive results in both studies. The student teacher in Study 1 came to value the researcher's presence in her daily life and to feel understood as a result of data collection procedures. Participants in Study 2 suggested that they probably told the researcher more than they would have a stranger because the researcher was a known quantity. They seemed to connect the study's capturing what they perceived to have really happened to the fact that the researcher was easy to talk to.

The researchers got to know the participants not only because of the stances they adopted toward interactions, but also because they spent so much time in their settings. The researcher in Study 1 spent over 140 hours observing and talking with the student teacher; in the process she collected over 600 pages of narrative data. The researcher in Study 2 attended meetings, assemblies, conferences, parent shadow days, award dinners and conducted interviews - to the

point where both she and the participants began to feel that she was "part of the furniture" of their setting.

The researcher's experiences with the resonance study in Study 2, where less time was spent, tend to confirm that this investment of time is an essential part of the method. Without that time logged just "being around," she was not able to gather the same kind of rich data that she attained in her study of the other school/business partnership. Within the resonance group in Study 2, the researcher had established relationships with the principal and the chief business participant, but there was no prior ethnography with the teachers, student, or parent participants. As the data show (DelPizzo, 1990), the researcher could not claim resonance. It appeared, after reading the transcripts, that she may in fact have prompted responses from the teachers.

Teachers in the resonance study did not seem to feel that the researcher was a "known quantity," and they were not as free with their responses. They didn't come to know the researcher as well, and, as a result, their cognition was not as accessible. Though they told her about their partnership projects and were very proud of their work, they did not provide the same kinds of insights that had been attained with the primary research group. There was not that continued re-interviewing, the levels described earlier, that encouraged reflection and a real searching on the part of the participants for the core reasons that accounted for the events under study.

These experiences suggest that if participants are to be "understood," a significant investment of time in the ethnography is mandatory if the researcher is to attain the level of insight needed to assess accurately the thinking of participants and the nature of the setting. Because of the time required to conduct a productive ethnography of thought, the number of individuals that can be studied may be fewer than can be included in the average survey, and the settings studied may need to be fairly small. Many potential ethnographers may be unable to invest the time required for such research, even if the number of participants and the setting(s) are kept to a manageable size.

Additionally, researchers may be unwilling to focus so much time and attention on relatively small settings, even if the potential result is rich detail. Douglas (1976) notes that direct experience provides the most reliable form of knowledge about a social situation, but "researchers often compromise this because policy-oriented work demands a big picture of society; in consequence we make do with less reliable forms of truth" (p.7). The temptations to eschew ethnographies of thought for research on a larger scale may be quite tempting. However, there may be no better way to attain rich understandings of thought and contexts in a wide variety of educational settings.

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